



# CONTEMPLATIVE OUTREACH ONTARIO

SILENCE SOLITUDE SOLIDARITY SERVICE

OUR NEWSLETTER



SPRING 2021 – N° 1 1

## A Word from the Editor

I started this issue over a year ago! But we were in a pandemic which disrupted considerably everything, including a construction project at my new place in Cobourg... and this Newsletter — among many other things! We all know what it is, don't we? Now we have to catch up.

We had our second COO conference (COO 2019) in September 2019 at a Comfort Inn in Niagara Falls. Despite real space constraints, the participants were rather enthusiastic regarding the theme (Cultivate the roots. The leaves and branches will take care of themselves.), the speakers (Kess Frey and Nada Conic). It was a "meaning and enjoyable conference." If you missed it, save the date for the next one next year: COO 2022, July 15-17 at Mount Carmel Monastery in Niagara Falls. Also, we have already planned COO 2026, to celebrate thirty years of Contemplative Outreach in Ontario, in July too at Mount Carmel Monastery. Please, mark your calendars.

A practical point — but an important one so I brought it to the first page (it usually appears on the last page): if you are a facilitator don't forget to forward this Newsletter to the members of your group as we don't have the capacity to contact each member individually. Thank you so much.

And in that vein, I also bring here the call to your own contribution to OUR

Newsletter. Feel free to send the review of a book you have enjoyed reading or a movie you have seen. Sharing is wonderful.

You may or may not know that the relatively new administrator of Contemplative Outreach Limited comes from Edmonton, Canada! Her name is Mary Jane Yates. You'll certainly see more of her name in the future.

Let's continue to pray for peace. May the Holy Spirit keeps guiding us in this year 2021!

*Marie-Noëlle Maillard*  
[logos302@sympatico.ca](mailto:logos302@sympatico.ca)

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## Theological Principles with Commentaries

2. A commitment to the practice of Centering Prayer is the primary expression of belonging.

*Commentary*

*The daily practice of Centering Prayer is the essence of belonging to the community.*

3. The theological foundation of Centering Prayer is the Divine Presence in every member of the human family.

*Commentary*

*The presence of the Divine in us is the permanent self-giving of God to every human person. The Word of God and Source of all creation sustains everything that exists and relates to each human being in a personal way. The primary call of the Spirit is to consent to this intimate relationship.*

### Your COO Team

Rev. Kevin Steeper and Debbie Wilson-Safa, representing the Southwestern region

Jennifer Pothier and Marie-Noëlle Maillard, representing the Central region

Hélène Goulet and Susan Kehoe, representing the Eastern region.

— Kevin and Marie-Noëlle are co-coordinators.

### Upcoming Events

**\*\*Zoom Workshop on The Four Levels of Listening and Soul Friending Saturday, November 6, 2021**

Organized by the Central Region and presented by Susan Komis. Save the date and stay tuned for more details. Everyone is welcome from the three regions!

**\*\* Contemplative Outreach International Conference in Denver, Colorado September 16-19, 2021. Denver Airport Marriott at Gateway Park.** The theme for this year's conference is: *The Global Embrace: Our Widening Reach, Our Deepening Connection.*

For the first time in Contemplative Outreach history, this conference will be offered through a combination of both online and in-person sessions, with the primary focus on learning about and celebrating the diversity of our worldwide family. Mark your calendars and check the CO website soon for registration information.

**\*\* Bethany Retreat Center, in Frenchville, Pennsylvania.** This retreat center is within driving distance from most of Ontario and offers retreats for the Contemplative Outreach community, including a training for presenters. For more information, visit their website: [bethanyretreatcenter.org](http://bethanyretreatcenter.org)

**-Contemplative Spirituality in a Contemporary Time**

**June 10-13, 2021 (Thursday-Sunday)**

Stages of Prayer as Related to Faith Development, presented by Susan Komis  
Offering: US\$298.00 per person  
Deposit: US\$75.00

**-Two 6-day Retreats**

**July 7-12, 2021 (Wednesday-Monday)**

**August 18-23, 2021 (Wednesday-Monday)**

Pray Without Ceasing - Centering Prayer  
Presented by Sr. Ruth Ann Madera and Fr. Phil Billotte

Offering: US\$625.00 per person

Deposit: US\$125.00

**\*\* COO 2022 at Mount Carmel, July 15-17, 2022. Save the date and stay tuned!**

## Regional Spotlights

### *SOUTHWESTERN (SWOCCO)*

Greetings from SWOCCO!

The Covid-19 pandemic has had a serious impact on our regional efforts over the last year. We were in the process of planning our May 2020 retreat when the pandemic scuttled our best-laid plans. As a result, we were forced to cancel our retreat but as the year proceeded we were able to pivot to the online world.

The Zoom online platform became a necessary tool as some of our Centering Prayer groups moved to this format in an effort to gather, pray and support one another.

As we moved deeper into the pandemic experience of 2020, we held an online gathering in December with participants from across the SWOCCO region taking part. The SWOCCO 2021 May retreat took place online due to the continuing restrictions. It featured H  l  ne Goulet who returned to be our presenter after being well received at our May 2019 retreat.

#### **Marlene Kelly-Kolotylo:** **An expression of thanks**

I have the privileged task of offering a few words regarding a wonderful woman who has given much to the Centering Prayer movement in Southwestern Ontario and beyond, namely Marlene Kelly-Kolotylo. I had the pleasure of first meeting Marlene at an introductory workshop hosted by the church I was serving as a minister. Our relationship has deepened over the past 15 years and I am grateful to Marlene for her contemplative bearing, warmth and compassion that is so evident in her life.

Marlene was first introduced to Centering Prayer when she was living in Winnipeg, Manitoba. She found this style of prayer deeply attractive and that initial experience

led her to explore more deeply in the 1980s and 90s as Contemplative Outreach was getting itself established. Marlene moved to Southwestern Ontario and it was there that she met Rose-Marie McIsaac. This introduction brought Marlene into Centering Prayer circles in Ontario and she made connections with others who shared her passion for the contemplative dimension of the Gospel.

In the early 2000s Marlene began to receive training in order to assume greater leadership and responsibility in the growing movement of Contemplative Outreach. This call to leadership brought her into contact with the late Carolyn Gratton, completion of facilitator training and service as part of the Canadian team of Contemplative Outreach. Marlene also served for a number of years as the first regional coordinator of SWOCCO and at the provincial level as well.

Marlene has given much to the establishment and flourishing of Centering Prayer in Canada because she sees Centering Prayer as a way of life, as a way of coordinating with the "Holy Present" in the ordinary moments of life. For her it is a vehicle for grace. Contemplative Outreach has given her a contemplative community, a vessel, to hold her contemplative practice and offer it to others. This support has taken on a deeper significance with the passing of her husband, David, in February of 2020.

On behalf of the SWOCCO service team and members I would like to express my deepest thanks to Marlene for her presence and the gifts that she has shared in her ministry over the years to promote Centering Prayer. We have been and continue to be touched deeply.

Blessings and peace,

The Rev. Kevin Steeper, coordinator  
[KSteeper@united-church.ca](mailto:KSteeper@united-church.ca)

## *CENTRAL (COCO)*

During the past two years, even in the absence of a Newsletter, we've not been idle. Like in the other regions many groups had to switch to Zoom for their meetings.

In 2019, the Servant-Leadership Team organized a survey to know the needs of our 33 groups. For various reasons, the summary kept being delayed. We'll get there eventually.

In 2020, a retreat on St. John of the Cross, with Nada Conic, was organized at Jericho House, just before the first lockdown.

Marilyn Brandon kept doing a great job with Group Profiles. She has now moved but is willing to continue whenever it's convenient for her.

Thanks to Sue Woollard's perseverance, several online Introductory Workshops have been, and continue to be, organized.

Under the leadership of Martha Dvorak and Roddy Duchesne, the St. Leonard's group in Toronto worked very hard on a pilot project on the relationship between Soul Friending and Centering Prayer.

In March this year, we welcomed on board Geneviève Gareau-Mossé, from the Niagara region. She is the newest member on the Servant-Leadership Team.

Also, we have launched the process for a new leadership as my last term as coordinator will end in December 2021.

Two places worth having in one's address book for workshops or retreats:  
\*\*Mount Mary Immaculate Retreat Centre, 437 Wilson Street East in Ancaster  
\*\*Jericho House in the Niagara Peninsula.  
Website: [www.jerichohouse.org](http://www.jerichohouse.org).

We continue to serve you with humility and love.

Marie-Noëlle Maillard, coordinator  
[logos302@sympatico.ca](mailto:logos302@sympatico.ca)

## *EASTERN (COEO)*

Since last writing our little team has gotten a bit smaller and our offerings all but postponed due to pandemic!

However, I can report that our annual Advent retreat was carried out at the usual Galilee Retreat Centre, in Arnprior, 40 minutes west of Ottawa. Pandemic protocols were in place and the capacity in late November of 12 in-house went well. With 7 joining us online.

Our annual Lenten retreat was totally virtual due to stay-at-home order in late March. It was a steep learning curve for me with tech part ably done by a Galilee staff member from his home and me – leading the retreat and meditations from the kitchen table. It went remarkably well with 12 on the zoom squares. A pleasant surprise for me was that the gathering of silence was not compromised by being on the airwaves! Perhaps another sense of knowing presence is all around.

Many of our groups are either not meeting or in the case of group at St. John the Evangelist is offering online. There is a plan afoot for two of us to offer an Introduction to Centering Prayer online in late May. Another adventure in the cyberspace!

As the Spring unfolds and Summer blooms in this still uncertain and challenging of times, may we be blessed to hear that still small voice within, saying pause, wait, stop, rest... Thanks be to God in whom "we live and move and have our being."

Veni Sancte Spiritus.

Susan Kehoe, coordinator  
[smkehoe@rogers.com](mailto:smkehoe@rogers.com) or 613 725-9878

This region has five anglophone groups and three francophone ones, all under COEO:

- St. John the Evangelist
- St. Luke's

- St. John's South March
- St. James Anglican church
- All Saints Westboro
- Gatineau-Aylmer
- Gatineau-Hull
- Gatineau

Their website is <https://coeo.ca/>.

## Publication

Carolyn Gratton's book, Discovering the Art of Soul Friending, published after her death is now available for purchase. Paul Fleming, a founding member of Contemplative Outreach Ontario, was one of the book's talented editors. Paul worked with a group of Carolyn's friends to ensure that this beloved final project was brought to fruition. This book can be purchased online at Amazon, Friesen Press, and Indigo.

## Seeds Sown

In Richmond Hill, under the leadership of Reverend James Ravenscroft, a new group, since Lent 2019. The group meets at the United Church, 10201 Yonge Street, Richmond Hill, L4C 3B2. Contact information: [james@rhuc.org](mailto:james@rhuc.org)

In Hamilton, originally at Grace Lutheran Church, but now via Zoom, under the leadership of Jim Bell, since February 2020. Every Wednesday (starting time 7:00 p.m.). Contact information: [jsbell13@gmail.com](mailto:jsbell13@gmail.com)

## In Memoriam

**David Kolotylo**, husband of Marlene Kelly-Kolotylo, in February 2020. Marlene has been for a long-time coordinator of the Southwestern Ontario region (SWOCCO), and a member of the Canada Service Team for a few years. Also, for the first time in Canada, she offered a presenters' training in Toronto in 2017.

**Sheila Hawkins**, on April 5, 2021, in the early morning of the first day of the celebration of Resurrection. Sheila, our sister in faith, was one of the original members of the Midland Centering Prayer Group.

## Thomas Keating On Pentecost

The Spirit is not given only once. He is an ongoing promise, an endless promise — a promise that is always fulfilled and always being fulfilled, because the Spirit is infinite and boundless and can never be fully plumbed. {...}

The Spirit is the ultimate promise of the Father. A promise is a free gift. No one is bound to make a promise. Once a promise is made, however, one is bound. When God binds himself, it is with absolute freedom, absolute fidelity. The Spirit, as promise, is a gift, not a possession. He is a promise that has been communicated; hence never to be taken back, since God is infinitely faithful to his promises. {...}

The divine Spirit is all gift but will not acquiesce to a possessive attitude. He is all ours as long as we give him away. {...}

The Spirit is the gift of God welling up in the Trinity from the common heart of the Father and the Son. He is the overflow of the divine life into the sacred humanity of Jesus, and then into the rest of us, his members.

*In The Mystery of Christ*

## Nota Bene

Group members please feel free to forward this Newsletter to interested friends. If for any reason you wish to receive future issues directly, please contact the editor. Similarly, please advise the editor if you no longer wish to receive this publication.